

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8_____ Page 15

William Smith House
name of property
Loudoun County, Virginia
county and State

=====

8. Statement of Significance

The William Smith House, located at 38678 Piggott Bottom Road, two miles north of the village of Hamilton, in Loudoun County, Virginia, is architecturally significant under Criterion C. Constructed ca. 1813-1820 in the Federal style, the two-story, side-hall brick house is an excellent example of the substantial, quietly stylish dwellings erected by prosperous Quaker farmers in western Loudoun County during the early nineteenth century. With its contemporaneous brick side wing, it is highly representative of its time and place. William Smith was prominent in Loudoun's Quaker community and was an elder of his Meeting. Like others of his faith, he owned no slaves but maintained his relatively small holdings through his own labor and that of his family and hired hands. His home and its impressive cluster of outbuildings, which include a large brick barn (one of only five still extant in Loudoun County) and a two-story brick springhouse, both constructed at or near the time the house was built, stood at the heart of an approximately 212-acre farm¹ that remained intact in Smith family ownership for 115 years and continues to be farmed even today. The property is a tangible reminder of the influence of the frugal, principled Quaker farmers in the history of Loudoun County. The nominated property consists of 24.6 acres and contains seven resources, including five buildings and two structures. Of the total number, six are contributing. There are four contributing buildings: the house (ca. 1813-1820); the barn (ca. 1813); the springhouse (ca. 1813); and the cement-block garage (ca. 1948). One building, a concrete-block horse stable (ca. 1960), is non-contributing. There are two structures, both contributing: a frame corncrib (ca. 1900) and a frame-and-stone "loafing shed" (ca. 1900; repaired 1990).

¹ The acreage varied from year to year and from owner to owner, but the size of the farm's core remained fairly consistent.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8_____ Page 15

William Smith House
name of property
Loudoun County, Virginia
county and State

=====

Historical Information

William Smith (1764-1842)² was forty years old in 1804³ when he purchased land on the south side of Catoctin Creek, where he would later build a substantial brick house and a fine brick barn and springhouse. William was the youngest son of Henry Smith, a Quaker farmer who arrived in Loudoun County with his wife, Alice, and their seven children in 1768 or 1769⁴ from Plumstead, Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

In Loudoun (which had been the western portion of Fairfax County until 1757), Henry Smith joined his brother Samuel, who had relocated from Greenwich, Township, Morris County, New Jersey (across the Delaware River from Plumstead) seven or eight years earlier. Samuel, a Quaker "minister" or "preacher", and his wife, Naomi, had been disowned by their Monthly Meeting in New Jersey for having married too soon after the death of Samuel's first wife and because they were considered too closely related, as half-cousins, for the marriage to be within the Quaker discipline. Soon after their move to Virginia, however, they were able to repair their relationship with their former Meeting and to procure a certificate of removal to the Fairfax Monthly Meeting at Waterford in Loudoun County.⁵

Quakers had been in the region since 1732, when Amos Janney and a group of other Friends settled in the neighborhood of present-day Waterford. The Quakers set about acquiring relatively small parcels of unclaimed lands in the Fairfax Proprietary, which they either purchased outright or leased with the right to purchase later. For instance, Henry Smith's will gave William "the lease lott I now live on" while reserving for William's mother, Alice, "the new end of the dwelling house in which we now live." This suggests that Henry may have been leasing while he waited for the land to be offered for sale. It also suggests that William continued to live and farm there for some time after his father's death in 1784, possibly until he built the brick house.

As Friends returned on visits to their former homes in the north, spreading the

² William Brooke Feters, Six Columbiana, Ohio, Pioneer Families, Family 3, Samuel Smith (1765-1855) and Sarah Bishop: Ancestors and Descendants, p. 40

³ He bought 262 acres from Thomas and Mary Hough April 9, 1804, paying •1150. (Loudoun County Deed Book Vol. 2-E.). In 1829 he sold 25 acres to John Phillips, a neighbor, and in 1831 he sold another 25 acres to another neighbor, David Brown, thus reducing the acreage on this farm to 212 acres.

⁴Feters, op cit. Addendum to Chapter III, Section B: Samuel⁶ Smith in Greenwich, New Jersey, p. 8

⁵ Feters, Addendum, p. 3.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8_____ Page 15

William Smith House
name of property
Loudoun County, Virginia
county and State

=====

word among family and neighbors about available land in Virginia.⁶ their numbers in Loudoun increased fairly quickly. Because they were opposed to slavery, the Friends' farms were necessarily limited to only as much land as they could work with family and other non-slave labor--generally around 200 acres.⁷ The small-farm pattern of the Quakers was in marked contrast to the manorial pattern preferred by slave-holding settlers from the south whose sprawling plantations were found elsewhere in the county, but it had certain advantages. Friends liked having neighbors close at hand, and their closely spaced farms helped to soften the isolation of the Virginia frontier. Furthermore, their farms were clustered around small villages, such as Lincoln, Harmony (which later became Hamilton), Waterford, Hillsboro, and, later, the town of Leesburg, which became the county seat when Loudoun County split off from Fairfax County in 1757.

Although Henry Smith had displayed a stubborn streak that was not considered seemly for a Quaker--he was disowned by the Fairfax Meeting in 1773 after he sued a Quaker neighbor, Isaac Nichols, at law and refused to arbitrate their differences,⁸--his son William appears to have been well regarded among his fellow Friends. In 1814, William was approved as an Elder by the Quarterly Meeting⁹--around the same time his brick barn is thought to have been constructed.¹⁰

The Quakers of Loudoun County were noted for their thrift and industry, qualities William Smith must have shared. His barn was large handsome, and well built, the better to hold the sizable crops of wheat that his fields produced. William's sons Jonas and John were obviously full participants in the farming operation, and they are listed with their father in the personal property rolls of Loudoun County beginning in 1820. The family's reported taxable goods included 11 mules, colts, and horses; two cattle; one two-wheel carriage; one watch; and two candlesticks of silver or cut glass. The tax was \$10.14. The year 1820 is the first in which a significant rise in real property taxes appears after the presumed date of construction for the house

⁶Asa Moore Janney and Werner Janney, Ye Meeting House Smal: A Short Account of Friends in Loudoun County, Virginia, 1732-1980. (Lincoln, Va.: np, 1980), pp. 4-12.

⁷The same could be said of another group of settlers to western Loudoun County during this period, the Palatinate Germans.

⁸William Wade Hinshaw, Encyclopedia of American Quaker Genealogy, Vol. 6 (Richmond, Ind.: William Wade Hinshaw, publ., 1950), p. 562.

⁹Ibid., p. 707

¹⁰The presumed construction date for the barn is based on a statement by William and Ann Snidow Frazer, former owners of the farm that a stone with the inscription "1813" had existed on a wall of the barn. (Brenda Morgan Boidock, "History of the Smith Farm," typescript, June 1994) The stone was destroyed by workmen when the roof and upper walls were repaired in the 1960s.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8_____ Page 15

William Smith House
name of property
Loudoun County, Virginia
county and State

=====

and barn (1813), but it is also the year of a mandatory state-wide rise in property taxes. Although the evaluation of William Smith's property increased ten-fold at that point, so did that of his neighbors. Thus the presumed construction date is based not on documentary evidence, but on the general character of the architecture of the house, as well as a statement by later owners that they had seen a date stone on the barn inscribed "1813".

William's side-hall and side-wing brick house was both substantial and quietly stylish, with Flemish bond on the front façade and, inside, a double parlor on the first floor. Considering its frontier location and Quaker ownership, the house displayed unusually fine decorative trim on the woodwork and mantels. The wing contained a spacious dining room and kitchen.

William Smith died in 1842, bequeathing the farm to Jonas Smith, his eldest son. Jonas held the farm until his death from pneumonia, which he contracted while wagoning to Georgetown, in 1852. Yardley Taylor's Loudoun County map of 1853 identifies it as belonging to "J. Smith heirs."¹¹ Jonas's will stipulated that the farm, now comprised of 369 acres, should remain in the hands of his wife, Miriam, until his eldest son arrived at the age of 21, when it was to be partitioned among all his heirs. In 1860, a court-appointed commission oversaw the partition, awarding Jonas's three oldest sons, Joshua (born 1838), Thomas (born 1833), and William (born 1835), 162 undivided acres of the property. Joshua eventually acquired a total of 213 acres of the farm from the other heirs, buying the last portions in 1873.¹²

There is no specific information concerning the Smith Farm's treatment during the Civil War, and no major engagements took place in the area. However, the fertile fields and full barns of Loudoun County were frequent targets of raids by both Confederate and Federal forces, as Confederate raiders under ,Colonel John S.Mosby ranged through the countryside, harassing Federal troops and confiscating food, animals, and equipment. Federal troops, for their part, burned barns and other property to keep them out of Confederate hands and to discourage Southern partisanship. Additionally, there were repeated efforts by the Confederates to conscript the local men for military service, countered by Federal arrests of peaceable Quakers.¹³ Despite widespread destruction, however, the Quaker areas apparently recovered quickly after the war, and Quakers, generally known as Unionists, often were, unlike Southern sympathizers, able to serve in elected posts immediately. At any rate, Joshua

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¹² Brenda Morgan Boidock, A History of the Smith Farm, June 1994. The chronology of ownership of the Smith Farm presented here is based on information in Mrs. Boidock's paper.

¹³ Charles Preston Poland, Jr. From Frontier to Suburbia, Marceline, Mo.: Walsworth Publishing Company,, 1976

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8_____ Page 15

William Smith House
name of property
Loudoun County, Virginia
county and State

=====

Smith's sturdy brick barn survived the war, and his purchase of the entire farm in the early 1870s indicates that his financial fortunes were either relatively undamaged or quickly repaired.

In 1881, Joshua and his wife, Sarah Hatcher Smith, sold half of the tract on which the farm is located to Joshua Hatcher, Sarah's father. Joshua Hatcher willed the property to his grandchildren, Laura and Albert H. Smith. When Joshua Smith died intestate in 1907, Laura and Albert inherited the other half of the farm, and Albert sold his portion to Laura, thus reassembling the pre-1881 tract of 212 acres. Laura Smith married for the first time in 1907, at the age of forty, to Henry J. Hoge. After their marriage, they lived at "Waverly" in Hamilton, Virginia, and rented the Smith farm for a number of years to a tenant named Payne. Laura and Henry Hoge had only one child, which was stillborn.

In 1919, the house was sold to two families: John Edward Houser, his wife, Nora, his brother, Richard H. Houser, and Richard's wife, Delia. The Houser brothers and their wives, who were sisters, and children lived on the farm together "as one big family," according to Helen Houser White, without making any structural changes to the house. The Housers lived on the farm until the fall of 1941, a year or two after the death of Edward Houser.

In 1941, the house and farm were sold to Dr. William Penn Frazer, a Purcellville physician, and his wife, Anne Snidow Frazer. The Frazers rented the house to Charles Spring from 1941 until 1946, when they moved into it themselves. According to Brenda M. Boidock's history of the farm, Dr. Frazer "had trouble getting out of the long lane because of snow and ice in the first winters," so, "hearing that state highway crews would remove snow from private lanes needed for the transport of perishable goods, he decided to start a dairy operation."¹⁴

During the Frazers' occupancy, they constructed a two-car garage over a sunken area north of the northwest corner of the house, the site of an early icehouse that had been filled with trash over the years. In a severe storm ca. 1950, the brick bank barn was badly damaged. It was repaired by Elgin Rollison of Hamilton, whose daughter was Dr. Frazer's office nurse. The Frazers also carried out extensive renovations on the interior of the house, including the

¹⁴ Boidock, op. cit., p. 4.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8_____ Page 15

William Smith House
name of property
Loudoun County, Virginia
county and State

=====

removal of a partition between the double parlors and the addition of closets around the upstairs fireplaces.

In 1978, the property was subdivided, and a 24.567-acre tract containing the house, barn, and brick springhouse was purchased by John Kenneth and Brenda Morgan Boidock. With their children, Alexander Morgan Boidock and Megan Rose Boidock, the Boidocks have made their primary residence there. They have made no major changes in the property, other than to remove the badly deteriorated frame portion of the barn's forebay, and have concentrated their efforts on the preservation, stabilization, and maintenance of its significant historical features. Since the Boidocks' purchase of the property in 1978, it has continued to be farmed.